826 [764] [763] [754] [752] [845]

As to the gross structure of the body, some persons learned about the skeleton when, in preparing corpses for cremation, the undertaker stripped the decaying flesh from the bones, usually in the presence of relatives and spectators of all ages. Occasional autopsies because of suspected sorcery, and surgical removal of a fetus from a deceased mother by caesarian section led to some knowledge of organs and blood vessels. Male and female masseurs of considerable competence were trained in the Chinese neuro-muscular system. A system of "origins," e.g. that the elbow-origin was in the arm pit, and the chest originated at the spine, might relate to the Chinese concept of linkage points on the body, in particular, acupuncture. In Bang Chan's popular conceptualization, the protecting skin which enclosed the body was thin at the top of the head and especially so at the stomach area. An old image also persisted that the body cavity itself was a relatively undivided space extending from neck to pelvis. Inside the cavity, food dropped from the top, faeces packed down at the bottom. Through the body curculated slowly the blood; several kinds of water (nām) (Mcf. 453) e.g., the nâm khraa (refuse-water) (ibid. 453) in the abdomen; and several winds (lom) (ibid. 728) e.g., the pushing lom bēng (ibid. 487), and the pulling lom chawat (ibid. 287). The small hair-whorls noted on the head, hip, or shoulder were construed as minor vortices of these currents, or as souls (khwan).

827 [792]

826

Foremost in people's minds were the elemental constituents of the body. The human body, along with every animal, plant, or mineral in the world, was made up of 4 elements (thāt): earth, fire, water, and wind (air).[10] This ancient four-fold view, also familiar to the Greeks, had mixed in Bang Chan with the traditional five-element Chinese system (metal, earth, fire, water, wood) because gold, iron, and wood were also spoken of as constitutional elements, and there may have been others. Some persons said that the proportions of the 4 major elements were the same for everyone, others, that they varied for different temperaments, which were also affected by the presence or absence of elements other than the basic 4.

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10. "The body, comprising about a bushel of powdery earth-element, is held together by half a bushel of juicy water-element, and propped up by the windy-element. The fiery element digests what is eaten or drunk and preserves the body". (Visuddhi-Magga. [Warren:157-158]).

the slight differences in ministrations. "The Muslim midwife massages more than the Buddhist." The women easily entered into reciprocal courtesies. The Muslim woman knew the steps in the Buddhist winnowing ceremony and performed them as desired. One Buddhist mother dispensed, however, with the winnowing "because the midwife was Muslim." A Buddhist woman made up the khwan khăo in the fashion specified by the Muslim midwife and participated in the latter's teacher-rite.

Certain fundamental ideas of the Muslims led to reinterpretations of familiar Buddhist terms and activities. "Khwan" referred to the soul, but with no implication of reincarnation. "Bun," meaning "merit" to the Buddhist, meant charitable giving in the sense of tithes, for Islam prescribed that a portion of one's income be given to the poor. On the other hand, the Muslims had taken over many Buddhist practices: for one, the acceptance of Buddhist holy water as a cure for spirit attack.

Completely Muslim was the stress on physical and moral purification as an objective of every rite, and conversely, the prevalence of the idea of defilement. "Circumcision is to cleanse the body before growing up," it was said. Muslim mortuary rites were elaborate procedures for purification. When a Muslim baby died, the Buddhist midwife said, "The body was cleaned before burial," implying thorough measures beyond his ordinary experience. Procreation was viewed as dangerous and contaminating. The behavior that hid sexual phenomena at the same time by constant prescriptions kept sexuality much more in mind. Muslims separated males from females, for example, at feasts. No Muslim male ever became a midwife.

The events surrounding childbirth illustrated the differing viewpoints between Muslim and Buddhist. In the seventh month of her pregnancy, a Muslim woman called on on her chosen midwife, and gave her a gift of betel pepper leaves and areca nut to assure her services (făk thong: to deposit gold). On returning home, she went as fast as possible "to insure fast delivery." Since Muslims frowned on liquor, their medicines were made up of hot-tasting spices in hot water. Yet one Muslim midwife prescribed large doses of liquor before and during parturition. For labor and delivery, a Muslim was stricter about utilizing the privacy of the small enclosed room, if there were one, while in the Buddhist household "it could be anywhere" in the house. Muslim men, except for husband, brother, or father, were excluded from the scene. The Muslim khwan khăo contained "7

796 The actual ritual of these ceremonies did not take a great deal of time although it was important. Most of the time and effort went into preparing and serving food. Even a small celebration involved cooperative effort among relatives and friends. For every event, the Buddhist altar in the home was decorated and offerings were made to the house-spirit. A big cremation might require planning in detail for years ahead: invitations to priests and relatives in distant parts of the country; hiring an orchestra and obtaining ceremonial gear. For the largest events, when the guest lists ranged upward to 60 or so priests and 400 other guests, one borrowed the hundreds of trays, dishes and bowls owned by the temple. No rental fee was charged for these, but such items had to be returned the next day, clean, and damaged articles replaced or paid for. As the day or days drew near, boat-loads of fresh provender were bought at big markets, and organized cooperative cooking went on under the direction of a competent person, usually one of the "professional" cooks of the village. The day before one ordination, 33 women were seen preparing vegetables, fish and soup; 13 others were making 7 kinds of desserts; about 50 others of both sexes were at different tasks, the men in particular cooking Chinese noodles, grating coconut, stirring, stoking fires. The picture was one of rows of stoves, pots so large they were stirred with a boat paddle, buckets of sugar, eggs by the hundreds, a hired generator to run a mechanical coconut-grater. On this occasion two meals were served. At another splendid (1)ngaan, the priests were fed three meals, other guests up to eight meals, over a period of two and one-half days. Workers had received additional meals beforehand.

262 The banquet comprised rice and many dishes not met with in daily fare: Chinese noodles; "with-rice" dishes of several kinds, rich in fish, meat and vegetables: for example, fried chicken with internal organs, garlic and pepper; fried pork with mung bean; (2)mii (a fried vermicelli) with fish, vegetables, and a tomato sauce; many different desserts made of eggs, rice flour, glutinous rice, agar, coconut and coconut milk, sugar, sweet potato, dried green beans; flowers served in syrup, fresh fruit such as watermelon; ices and coffee.

128 In Appendix A, p. 102 is a list of foods bought for an 262 annual homage-to-the-teacher rite. It is the nearest approxi- 796 mation to a quantitative record of food for a ceremony that 815 the research group obtained. The prominence of purchased foods, especially of flesh foods, is noteworthy.

264 On the great day, the priests were served first, either 956 at 7 a.m. or 11 a.m., or both, always at least in part by the 992 host, who sat and chatted with them. No one else ate until

435 Some information as to the cost in baht of the larger
796 ceremonies held in 1954, and their scale, was obtained from
[126] the school teacher's diary. Examples follow:

[792] Ordination: Total cost 8,000, including food 1400, liquor 800. Guests contributed 4000.

[852] Top-knot tonsure: Total cost 1550, including new utensils 550; 6 priests fed; each priest given 12 baht; 12 (2)pin-(1)toos filled to take to the temple; 100 duck eggs donated, and 300 baht received from 30-40 guests.

[764] Cremation[1]: Total cost 40,000[2], including about 10,000 for food; 61 priests fed[3]. About 500 guests contributed 4377.

[875] Homage-to-the-teacher ritual:
A: Total cost 715, including food 565 and liquor 150; 40 tang (800 liters) fish and 3 tang Chinese noodles donated.
B: Total cost, 11,000[4].

[585] Wedding: A: Thai Buddhist: Total cost 5000.
[582] Guests gave 2300.
B: Rite of forgiveness after elopement:
[184] a meal, with 5 bottles of liquor.
C: Moslem: 2 buffalo slaughtered.
400 guests.

585 Arranged marriages could be large merit-making affairs,
262 with a huge procession from one house to the other of twenty-
four "pairs" of specified foods, i.e. two bearers each of
[583] sugar cane, fruits, sweetmeats and other things. At more
modest weddings and the rite of forgiveness for a couple who
had eloped, food might differ from the usual fare only by in-
cluding the three essentials of a wedding: pork, chicken and
alcohol.

273 Increased consumption of alcoholic beverages during the
796 ceremonial season was indicated by the sales of one local
443

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1. Cremation was the last of several rites at death. Private 7-day, 30-day and 100-day rites were held, when priests came to the home to chant and to be feasted.

2. With cooperative assistance from well-situated relatives in Bangkok.

3. The whole chapter of priests from Wat Bang Chan
[792] was always included at cremations, and often others from a
[574] distance.

4. See list of food purchased, Appendix A, pp. 102-103.

125 Question 16.d. (Cont'd)

431 Construction activities (Cont'd)

651
- To the Wat (to repair Wat, construction in Wat, fixing walls) 27
- Contribution for building materials (buy cement, concrete floor, wood and tin, for new cement sidewalks, water tank) 21
- To Surao (general fund, repair) 9
- To build a bridge 8
- To buy a generator 6
- To build priest's house bathroom 5
- To build preaching hall 3

Ceremonials

[796]
- For ceremonies, unspecified 12

[764]
- To guild the golden leaf 27
- To cremation (to build crematorium; to cremate father, people without relatives; to build corpse go-down; priest's funeral) 12
- To Wat fair 10
- Other (to Katlia, to revise the Buddhist sacred book, to ordain priest, for building Buddha figure, to New Year festival, for dancing girls) 11
- To Surao fair 4

Food and related donations
- Gave rice, unspecified 5
- Gave rice (food) for Wat, priests 18
- Gave rice for Wat fair 7
- To buy utensils (including cooking utensils) for Wat 6
- To buy utensils for Surao 6
- Gave food to Surao 1

243 needs at least two work suits in each rice season, one
291 during the field preparation and another during the har-
511 vesting season.

372 Kerosine is used every day for lighting purposes.
226 We do not include in this category kerosine which is used
511 in the farm work; but that used with the pressure lamp in fishing by spearing during the night is included in the ordinary household expenses, for we do not consider fishing as a farm enterprise but as a routine activity participated in by all Bangchan residents, farmers and non-farmers alike.

431 Contributions to neighbors is a necessary item of
476 expense in the village. These are cash gifts made by in-
796 vited guests to the sponsor of such rituals as ordination,
511 cremation, marriage, topnotch-cutting, and teacher worship.
[792] These rituals usually take place during the dry season fol-
[764] lowing harvesting when cash is abundant in the village and
[535] are always followed by feasts, not uncommonly in a series of two or three days. Since all these rituals necessitate the participation of the priests, they have to be arranged in consultation with the temple to avoid conflicting schedules. Although few rituals have been noted to be in conflict with one another, usually they are spread throughout the dry season and most people are able to attend rituals to which they are invited. In cases where they cannot attend in person, they are obliged by conventional requirement to send in their cash contributions. The standard cash contribution is 5 - 10 baht. Usually, a